

WIDEWALLS

KIM DONG YOO AT HASTED KRAEUTLER

Lorenzo Pereira
April 25, 2015



Eros and Psyche, 2015 (detail view)

So many contemporary artists have been interested in portraying iconic cultural figures – actors and actresses, popular politicians, film-makers, celebrities in general. When we talk about celebrities and contemporary art, it's not only about the superficial and fashionable relationship between celebrities and contemporary artists. It's also about all the complexity of the representation of popular culture within the contemporary art field. An amazing Korean artist Kim Dong Yoo became globally recognized due to his famous Face series, composed of hundreds of tiny, individual portraits of famous figures, rendered entirely by hand. Yet, Kim Don Yoo goes beyond pure portrayal of the icons of popular culture. His focus on creating image within the image made him apply an obsessive, perfectionist vision to the works that evoke the history of Op Art, while his paintings defy the urge to visually apprehend everything at once. His latest works will be exhibited at Hasted Kraeutler, while the show is entitled Living Together.

Kim Dong Yoo: Pop Art and Visual Perception

The works by Kim Dong Yoo are truly impressive, especially considering the wide range of references that could be

noticed in his oeuvre. He perfectly combines the tradition of Pop-Art with op art techniques and methods, creating beautiful compositions that examine the possibilities of visual perception (we wrote about many contemporary artists whose work examines the possibilities of visual perception. Check out the works by Alberto Biasi or Julie Oppermann). Kim Dong Yoo's compositions are usually composed of various elements and parts, and every "pixel" contains information that is as pertinent as the overall impression it produces. As the viewer approaches a composition, his or her vision changes, and as they move and change the angle of observation, "images within images" begin to shift. Therefore, the subjects of Kim Dong Yoo's compositions are changing depending on the position of the viewer. Another central point in the artist's work is the portrayal of celebrities throughout history. As Kim Dong Yoo says, he has always been interested in movies and actors. But, the artist is also interested in the potential reproducibility of an image and in the question of appropriation (check out the article: Age of appropriation). The works generally depict a star of the American stage and screen, from Audrey Hepburn to Madonna.



Andy Warhol, 2014

Hasted Kraeutler: Kim Dong Yoo

It's impossible not to see the reference to Andy Warhol's work in Kim Dong Yoo's portraits. As Andy Warhol portrays the faces of famous people, Kim Dong Yoo represents celebrities quite similarly. Since his appropriated subjects have been reproduced millions of times throughout history, on posters and in art-history classrooms, the artist challenges the idea of the "iconic" image by composing them of well-known motifs in his intricate, one-of-a-kind compositions. With his photo-realist mosaic paintings, visually perceived as small pixels, we can see, for example, a heroic image of John F. Kennedy constructed out of hundreds of Marilyn Monroes, while Ingrid Bergman's classic, three-quarter head shot is illustrated by way of Humphrey Bogart's minute likeness.

Kim Dong Yoo at Hasted Kraeutler : Living Together

In Living Together exhibition at Hasted Kraeutler, new works by Kim Dong Yoo will be shown. Rather than exploring contemporary subjects – as he did for his famous Faces series of global cultural icons – Korea's preeminent painter here provides fresh and compelling takes on canonized art historical works of art and religious iconography. With the amazing methods the artists uses, and with very interesting subjects he represent, the works by Kim Dong Yoo are truly impressive. So, use the opportunity and visit the Living Together exhibition. The show will be on view from April 30th until June 20th at Hasted Kraeutler in New York.